

The Honorable Kathy Hochul  
Governor of New York State

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins  
Majority Leader of the New York State Senate

The Honorable Carl E. Heastie  
Speaker of the New York State Assembly

Basil Seggos  
Commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

December 19, 2023

Dear Governor Hochul, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Speaker Heastie, and Commissioner Seggos,

We are writing with serious concerns about Southern Tier CO2 to Clean Energy Solutions, (a.k.a. 'Southern Tier Solutions') proposal to drill and frack for gas in New York using carbon dioxide (CO2), including "test wells" as soon as this spring.<sup>1</sup> About a decade after New York historically led the nation and protected public health and the environment by banning high-volume hydraulic fracking, this dangerous proposal to get around our state's fracking ban using CO2 poses many of the same threats to our water, health, and climate. We urge you to use your authority to stop this misguided project and ban CO2 fracking.

The proposed plan to transport waste CO2 to New York from other states, drill and inject high-pressure CO2 to release sequestered methane, and build new gas-fired power plants is reckless and would perpetuate our reliance on fossil fuels. As countless scientific studies about drilling and fracking demonstrate,<sup>2</sup> fractures are not controllable and could cause the CO2 as well as naturally occurring radioactivity in the shale to migrate, threatening to contaminate our drinking water. Furthermore, high pressure CO2 is itself very dangerous, and ruptured pipelines can result in asphyxiation. This was tragically illustrated in Satartia, Mississippi when a CO2 pipeline exploded, leading to mass CO2 poisoning that left 45 people hospitalized.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, high pressure CO2 injection underground poses significant risk of earthquakes.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lombardo, David. (Dec. 5, 2023.) "Southern Tier's natural gas eyed for extraction (again)." Capitol Pressroom. <https://capitolpressroom.org/2023/12/05/southern-tiers-natural-gas-eyed-for-extraction-again/>

<sup>2</sup>Concerned Health Professionals of New York and Physicians for Social Responsibility, "Compendium of Scientific, Medical, and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking and Associated Gas and Oil Infrastructure (Ninth Edition)," October 2023, <http://concernedhealthny.org/compendium/>.

<sup>3</sup> Simon, Julia. (Sept. 25, 2023.) "The U.S. is expanding CO2 pipelines. One poisoned town wants you to know its story." NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2023/05/21/1172679786/carbon-capture-carbon-dioxide-pipeline>

<sup>4</sup> Niyogi, S., Ghosh, A., Kumar, A., & Hammack, R. W. (2023). Tremor signals during fluid injection are generated by fault slip. *Science*, 381(6657), 553-558.

Banning fracking in New York has corresponded to health benefits for populations in New York's Southern Tier counties as compared with northern tier counties of Pennsylvania.<sup>5</sup> We must not reverse those health gains by now putting New Yorkers at risk with this dangerous, experimental approach.

Furthermore, we are deeply concerned that the CO2 fracking proposal would violate New York's nation-leading climate law, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). Under the law, New York must reduce greenhouse gas emissions 40% by 2030, which cannot be achieved with new gas development. Studies show that drilling and fracking operations and infrastructure are inherently leaky, releasing methane that is disastrous for the climate along with air pollutants that endanger public health. Drilling and fracking for fossil fuels, along with pipelines, gas plants, truck trips, and other infrastructure, is contradictory to the CLCPA. It is a false solution that would harm the environment and misallocate resources that should go toward transitioning to renewable energy and other proven climate solutions.

You have each been tremendous leaders on protecting public health and the environment and preventing climate change. Now, as New York faces a dangerous, experimental, and extreme new form of fossil fuel extraction, we urge you to ban drilling and fracking with CO2.

Sincerely,

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<sup>5</sup> Kevin S Trickey, Zihan Chen, and Prachi Sanghavi, "Hospitalisations for Cardiovascular and Respiratory Disease among Older Adults Living near Unconventional Natural Gas Development: A Difference-in-Differences Analysis," *The Lancet Planetary Health* 7, no. 3 (March 2023): e187–96, [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanph/article/PIIS2542-5196\(23\)00009-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanph/article/PIIS2542-5196(23)00009-8/fulltext)

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